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Senate

The Senate met at 12 noon and was called to order by the Honorable BEN RAY LUJÁN, a Senator from the State of New Mexico.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, during this sometimes chaotic season, remind our lawmakers anew that You will never leave or forsake us. Give them the wisdom to pray as if work had nothing to do with results and then to work as if prayer did not matter. As our Senators surrender life's crushing blows to Your mercy, transform their setbacks into stepping stones to abundant faith, hope, and joy. Use our lawmakers this day for Your glory.

We pray in Your sovereign Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

The bill clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, April 13, 2021.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable BEN RAY LUJÁN, a Senator from the State of New Mexico, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. LUJÁN thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

VIOLENCE AGAINST ASIAN AMERICANS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, over the past year, there has been a rising tide of violence and discrimination against Asian Americans, from shouted insults and racial slurs to outright physical assaults.

I have attended a whole bunch of rallies against Asian-American violence over the past few weeks. You would be heartsick—heartsick—to hear the stories shared, the fear in the voices of Asian-American citizens, and to listen to the way they change their daily lives to avoid the subway or stay indoors most of the day.

The surge in anti-Asian violence is revolting and, sadly, contains the echoes of dark chapters in our history when Asian Americans were subject to widespread bigotry and discrimination.

The poison of racism has always existed in America, but unfortunately, over the past 4 years, it seems to have found new life. There is no question that the former President fanned the flames of racial bias in our country and too often encouraged—let alone discouraged—the vicious slander that connected COVID-19 to the people of Asian descent.

Every day in America, in this 21st-century America, Asian Americans fear they might be insulted, assaulted, spat

upon, or even worse. As Americans, we must stand up and do something about it. The foundation of our pluralistic society is that an attack on one group is an attack on all of us. So tomorrow the Senate will vote on whether to take up and debate Senator HIRONO's anti-Asian hate crimes bill, sponsored by Representative MENG in the House. This bill is as unobjectionable as it could be. It would designate a point person at the Justice Department to identify hate crimes towards Asian Americans related to COVID-19, telling Federal law enforcement to make these hate crimes a top priority during the pandemic.

This isn't some kind of "gotcha" legislation. It is not some complex new program or appropriation. This is as straightforward as it gets. This is legislation our times demand.

Of course, we are open to strengthening the bill. I understand that there is an effort underway to add bipartisan legislation called the No Hate Act—sponsored by Senators BLUMENTHAL and MORAN, one Democrat and one Republican—as an amendment, and I fully support that effort.

The Blumenthal-Moran bill would provide resources to State and local law enforcement to improve hate crimes reporting, increase training, while also improving education to root out the bias that fuels these despicable, despicable acts. That makes perfect sense as a bipartisan amendment to Senator HIRONO's legislation, and I believe that combating hate against the Asian-American community should be thoroughly, if not unanimously, bipartisan.

Congress can send a strong signal in one loud, clear voice that these kinds of hate crimes will not be tolerated. The way to do it is for 60 Senators to vote to proceed to the bill tomorrow. I sure hope it will be more than 60. Then it is my intention to make the first amendment to the bill the bipartisan No Hate Act, but in order to offer the

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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